

OUTER BANKS SCENIC BYWAY

From Whalebone Junction in Dare County to Beaufort in Carteret County, the Outer Banks Scenic Byway traces the easternmost parts of North Carolina along the state's barrier islands.

North Carolina's barrier islands extend from the Virginia border south to Cape Lookout. They are separated from the mainland by six broad yet shallow sounds — from north to south, Currituck, Albemarle, Roanoke, Pamlico, Core and Bogue. These sounds range from three to 40 miles wide. Pamlico Sound is the largest sound along the U.S. East Coast, covering more than 1,800 square miles. It is visible to the west along many portions of the byway. The byway crosses its waters when taking the ferry from Ocracoke Island to both Hatteras and Cedar Island.

Currently, nine major islands, or banks, protect the mainland coast from the Atlantic Ocean's onslaught of winds and water. From north to south, these barrier islands are: Currituck Banks, Bodie (pronounced "body") Island, Pea Island, Hatteras Island, Ocracoke Island, Portsmouth Island, Core Banks, Shackleford Banks and Bogue Banks. Wind and water

shift the sands of these islands, which makes them transient not only in location but also in name.



Ocracoke Lighthouse

Whalebone Junction, along N.C. 12 where the byway begins, is located near the site of New Inlet.

This inlet opened in the 1720s and closed periodically until its last closing in the 1930s. Whalebone Junction received its name for a skeleton of a whale that beached nearby in 1927. The junction is at the end of Currituck Banks,

the northernmost barrier island in North Carolina. **Beginning at the stoplight where U.S. 64/158 and N.C. 12 intersect,** follow N.C. 12 South into the Cape Hatteras National Seashore on Bodie Island.

Continue past the Bodie Island Lighthouse, which was built in 1872 to replace the original lighthouse destroyed in the Civil War. Its 150-foot black and white banded stripe can be seen for several miles. A swimming beach and recreation center is located nearby at Coquina Beach.

Eleven miles south of Whalebone Junction, the byway crosses over Oregon Inlet onto Pea Island. Oregon Inlet opened in 1846 during a hurricane